Implication of Reading Skills Proficiency in First Year Students of UM Digos College: An in Depth Perception of First Year College students

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ABSTRACT: Reading remains a fundamental pillar of education, beyond mere text decoding, proficient reading unlocks the doors to critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and the ability to navigate a world saturated with information. This study explored the implications of reading skills proficiency among first-year students of UM Digos College. The study used a phenomenological descriptive research design and thematic analysis to explore the perceptions of first-year students regarding the implication of reading skills proficiency in the school, their self-assessment of reading skill proficiency, and the difficulties they experience in reading. The result found that first-year students perceive reading skills proficiency as having a positive impact on their self-efficacy, knowledge, and ability to think critically. They also reported that reading skills proficiency helps them to improve their fluency and pronunciation. However, students also reported experiencing difficulties with reading, such as time management and encountering unfamiliar words. The findings of this study suggest that it is important to promote reading skills proficiency among first-year college students. This can be done by providing students with opportunities to practice their reading skills, teaching them strategies for dealing with difficulties, and helping them to build their background knowledge.

KEYWORDS: Reading skills proficiency, first-year college students, self-efficacy, critical thinking, fluency, pronunciation, time management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental human activity that enables us to access information, expands our minds, ignites our imagination, and cultivates empathy. Reading equips us with the tools to navigate the world's complexities and enriches our lives profoundly. Moreover, reading is considered one of the most essential skills for academic success and personal growth (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2017). In higher education, reading proficiency is critical for students to understand complex literary texts, analyze information, and synthesize knowledge (Harrison, 2018). However, recent studies have shown that many higher-education students struggle with reading proficiency, which can negatively affect their academic performance and overall success (Arenson & Carapezza, 2019).

In the Philippines, reading skill proficiency among college students is a growing concern. According to the study by the Philippine Statistics Authority (2019), only 61.6% of Filipino college students are proficient in reading. The students' low reading proficiency is a cause for alarm, mainly because reading proficiency is linked to academic success and employ ability (National Assessment of Educational Progress). To gain a broader perspective, comparing Filipino college students' reading skills proficiency with their counterparts in other countries is essential. The Programmed for International Student Assessment (PISA) provides valuable insights into students' reading proficiency worldwide. According to Haw (2021), The Philippines participated for the first time in the Programmed for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA focused on reading proficiency, and Filipino students ranked lowest globally. Using Philippine data, we examined whether the need for supportive teaching would be associated with student reading achievement.

As stated by Chryzl Joy Deluao (2022), aside from factors, researchers have found that students' entry reading comprehension skills influence the result of the research. The participants of this research were identified from schools in far- flung areas of Davao del Sur and Davao Occidental, where internet connectivity and access to media are limited and inadequate. Students have a higher chance of improving their performance when exposed to different forms of media. Viewing and listening to films, clips, and other media can improve students' receptive and communicative skills and vocabulary. As a result, it shows that since the participants were less exposed to media and language, they have lower entry reading comprehension levels than the average Grade 8 students.

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is an assessment tool to measure students' reading proficiency. According to a study conducted by Espinosa and Allen (2023) titled "Reading Proficiency Level of College Students in the Philippines," it was found that a significant number of college students in the country have low reading proficiency. This study underscores the importance of assessing the reading skills of college students, as it affects their academic performance and overall success in higher education.

Furthermore, this issue hinders their ability to comprehend complex texts, extract relevant information, and critically analyze academic materials. Understanding the implications of this reading skills deficiency among first-year college students is crucial for addressing the problem effectively and implementing targeted interventions to improve their reading abilities. According to a report published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in 2019, employers consider strong reading and writing skills among the most essential qualities that college graduates should possess. The report states that "employers seek

college graduates who can communicate effectively in writing and orally, solve problems, and think critically" (NACE, 2019). Moreover, a study conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2019 found that only 35% of 12th-grade students in the United States were proficient in reading, highlighting the need for continued emphasis on reading skills development in higher education (NAEP, 2019).

Consequently, understanding the relationship among the many component skills of readers early in their reading development is essential because a deficiency in any of the component skills has the potential to affect the development of other skills and, ultimately, the development of an individual as a proficient reader (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Reading proficiency is highlighted in higher education as a critical component for academic success (Shahid, 2018). First-year students in higher education are expected to have a high level of reading proficiency, as most academic work involves reading and comprehension of written texts. However, research has shown that many first-year students need more reading skills to succeed in higher education (Xu, 2019).

As stated by the study by Xu (2019), an increasing number of first-year college students need to improve in reading skills proficiency. The study found that many first-year students struggled with reading comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. The findings suggest that many first-year students must be adequately prepared for the academic demands of higher education. The study recommends that institutions of higher education should prioritize reading skills development to improve the academic success of first-year students. Karakoç et al. (2022) examined the reading comprehension skills of first-year college students. They found that a significant proportion struggled with understanding complex texts. Also, Chen et al. (2018) investigated the factors influencing reading comprehension among first-year college students. The findings revealed that prior reading experience, motivation, and self-regulated learning significantly impacted students' reading comprehension skills. The study emphasized the importance of promoting reading engagement and meta-cognitive strategies to improve reading proficiency. In addition, Rodriguez (2019) explored the vocabulary skills of first-year college students and found that many students struggled with word recognition and comprehension. The study suggested that explicit vocabulary instruction and extensive reading practices could enhance students' vocabulary knowledge and reading proficiency. In a similar study, Shahid (2018) found that first-year students who lacked reading proficiency were likelier to struggle with academic work and perform poorly in exams. The study recommends that universities provide additional support to students who struggle with reading skills, such as remedial classes, academic tutoring, and workshops. First-year students' perception of reading skills proficiency is essential in understanding their challenges in developing the necessary reading skills for academic success.

Various factors contribute to a student's reading proficiency, such as prior knowledge, vocabulary, and fluency (Joshi & Aaron, 2021). Moreover, research has also identified socio-economic status (SES) as a crucial factor in a student's reading proficiency, with students from low-income families often experiencing reading difficulties (Watts, 2022). Regarding instructional approaches, technology has been found to improve reading skills among students. Digital reading programs are effective in improving students' reading proficiency, especially for struggling readers (Sakellariou & Carroll, 2019). Additionally, research has emphasized the importance of explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies, such as summarization and inference-making (Duke et al., 2020).

Furthermore, The Transactional Theory of Reading, proposed by Louise Rosenblatt in 1978 and supported by Martin in 2019, provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing students' reading skills proficiency. According to this theory, reading is not a one-way process where the reader merely decodes text but rather an interactive transaction between the reader and the text. Rosenblatt introduces two main components: the "efferent" and "aesthetic" stances. The efferent stance emphasizes extracting information and facts from the text. In contrast, the aesthetic stance focuses on the reader's emotional and imaginative response to the literary experience (Savolainen, 2020). By recognizing the importance of both stances, educators can foster a balanced approach to reading instruction, encouraging students to engage deeply with texts, make personal connections, and develop critical thinking skills (Chan, 2023). Therefore, improving reading skills proficiency among first-year college students is essential to facilitate their academic success.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study explored the implications of reading skills proficiency among first-year students of UM Digos College. Learning to develop and enhance students' reading skills requires dedication and perseverance. Evaluating the student's reactions and perspectives on the implied reading skill proficiency for first-year students is the main objective of this research.

To delve further, the study highlighted the following:
1. The perception of the first-year students in the implication of reading skills proficiency in the school.
2. The perception of first-year students of self-assessment of reading skill proficiency.
3. Some difficulties experienced by first-year students in reading.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a phenomenological descriptive research design. According to Renjith et al. (2021), the primary purpose of phenomenological research is to understand the essence of a phenomenon by capturing individuals' narratives, experiences, and emotions and providing detailed descriptions. Within educational contexts, phenomenological research focuses on exploring participants' lived experiences, perspectives, and emotions concerning a specific phenomenon. This method applies to the study since it will explore the implications of reading skills proficiency among first-year UM Digos College, Philippines students.
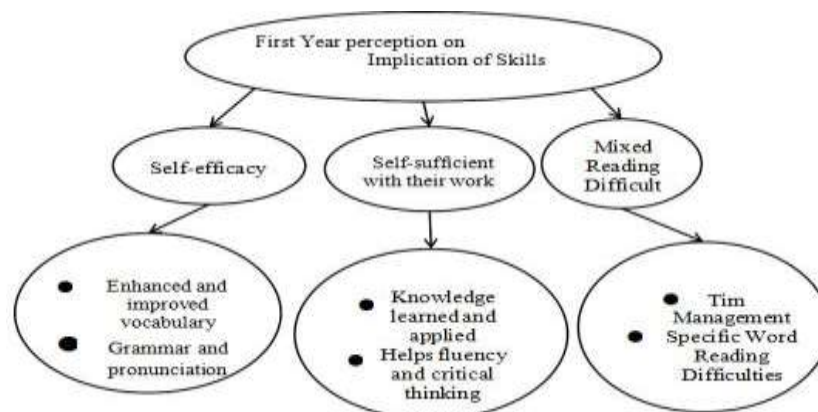
Thematic Analysis Flow Chart

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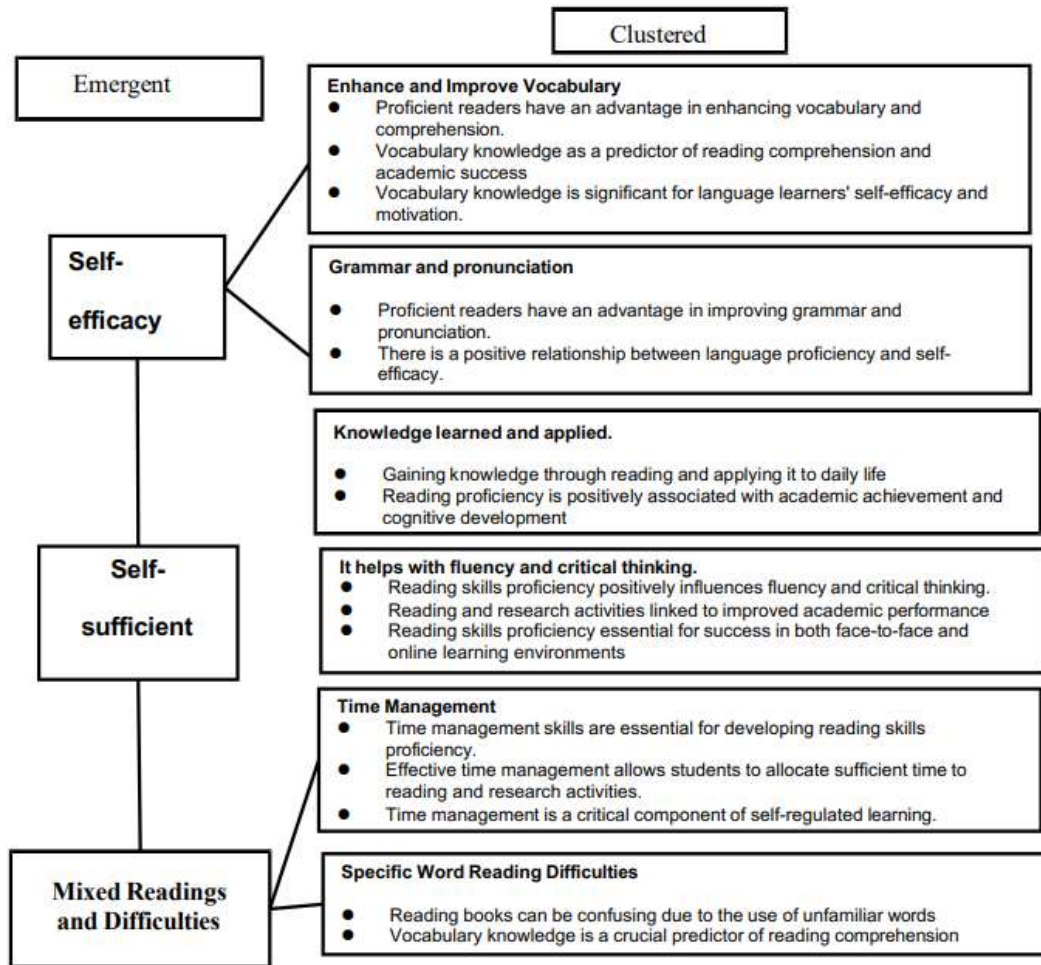
The researchers used thematic analysis in this study during the data interpretation and analysis phase; the researcher utilized noteworthy statements, derived meanings, and identified themes to construct a qualitative outcome. These findings are the foundation for developing a comprehensive understanding and insight into the research topic (Lester et al., 2020). Thematic analysis, a research method introduced by Gerald Holton in 1970, it has gained significant traction in the social sciences for analyzing qualitative data. The researchers used thematic analysis to describe or summarize patterns in data and it used to craft an interpretative narrative that connects the data to the research question, which the researchers conducted in identifying patterns, themes, and categories from the transcribed data. The themes and categories were then organized into a coherent narrative that presented the participants' perceptions of the implications of reading skills proficiency found in the preceding section of this study to arrange the participant's answers systematically, which derived three emergent themes, and six clustered themes are shown.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

First-Year students perception in the implication of reading skills proficiency in schools
Figure 1: First-Year students' perception in the implication of reading skills Proficiency in school

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The figure above showed the clustered motifs of the emergent theme of self- efficacy to improve reading skills proficiency that was identified in this study.

The results showed three (3) emergent themes and six (6) clustered themes that were obtained as timely validated by the data analyst following the development of the data procedures were among the three (3) key objectives that the researchers had specified.

A. Self-efficacy relates to confidence in their ability to carry out the behaviors required to achieve particular performance goals. This study's main goal is to determine the benefits of proficient readers used by language learners in reading situations. Taking into account the responses provided by the respondents during the various sessions:

Enhance and Improve Vocabulary. Having an enhanced and improve vocabulary in our generation is very important. One of its advantages is that we can easily blend into our community because we have this effectiveness to communicate, especially for language learners who are developing their vocabulary in reading. Participants 6 cited this as evidence.

The study's findings that enhancing and improving vocabulary can help students gain self-efficacy are consistent with previous research on the topic. According to Haerazi and Irawan (2020) and Torres and Alieto (2019), reading ability and vocabulary knowledge significantly impact students' self-efficacy and motivation to learn. Additionally, Cheng and Matthews (2018), Miralpeix and Muñoz (2018), Lervåg et al. (2018), and Marc et al. (2023) found that vocabulary knowledge is a significant predictor of reading comprehension and academic success.

In a study conducted by Marzban and Maleki (2019), it was found that reading ability is a crucial factor in academic achievement and success. The study emphasized that students with strong reading skills have better chances of understanding course materials and performing well in their academic activities. Moreover, according to The National Institute for Literacy (2018), reading proficiency significantly impacts an individual's academic and professional success, as it provides a foundation for critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication.

Furthermore, the current study's findings on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and self-efficacy among first-year college students are consistent with prior research. The results highlight the importance of enhancing and improving vocabulary skills to develop students' self-efficacy, which can lead to academic success and improved overall performance. Therefore, educators must prioritize and integrate reading comprehension strategies in their teaching methods to help students develop strong reading skills, ultimately contributing to their academic and personal growth.

Grammar and Pronunciation. Our generation's ability to improve grammar and pronunciation is critical. The advantage of this is that we can quickly understand what you are trying to say. Participants 4, and 7 cited this as evidence.

The majority of participants gave the same responses, indicating that having strong grammar and pronunciation contributed to their sense of self-efficacy, which allowed them to develop abilities that helped them to better themselves. The finding that strong grammar and pronunciation contribute to students' sense of self-efficacy is consistent with previous research on the importance of language proficiency in academic success (Kim, 2018; Mukhtar et al., 2021; Seliem et al., 2018). Self-efficacy, an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish a task, has been identified as a key predictor of academic achievement (Bandura, 1997).

Kim (2018) found that Korean college students' English language proficiency positively predicted their academic achievement, which was partially mediated by their self-efficacy. Similarly, Mukhtar et al. (2021) found that Pakistani university students' language proficiency was positively related to their academic performance, and their self-efficacy fully mediated this relationship. Seliem et al. (2018) also found a positive relationship between language proficiency and self- efficacy among Egyptian college students.

Furthermore, the idea that self-efficacy allows individuals to develop abilities and improve themselves is consistent with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. Bandura argued that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in behaviors that lead to success, and as a result, they are more likely to improve their skills and abilities over time.

In conclusion, the finding that strong grammar and pronunciation contribute to self-efficacy among first-year college students is consistent with previous research on the importance of language proficiency and self-efficacy in academic success. These findings suggest that interventions aimed at improving students' language proficiency and self-efficacy may be effective in promoting academic achievement.

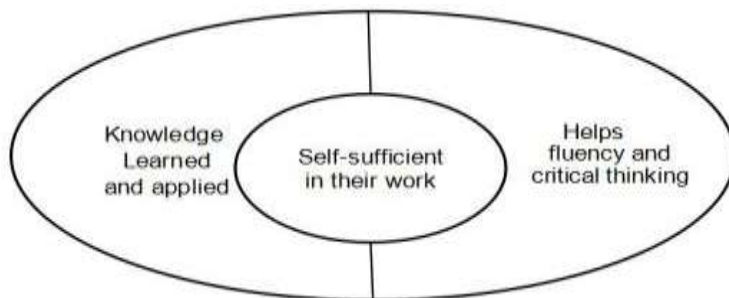**First-year student perception in Self-Assessment of Reading Skill Proficiency**

Figure 2. Concept of First-year student perception in Self-Assessment of Reading Skill Proficiency

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1. **B.Self- sufficiency with their work** to improve English, which was found in this study, is depicted as clustered motifs. The major objective of this study is to identify the perception when it comes to the concept of self-assessment of reading skill proficiency. Considering the responses of the respondents given during the several sessions:

Knowledge learning and applied. The respondents acquired knowledge and applied it to their daily lives as they used books and do some research. They responded as follows to support.
"I, myself, admires individual with high proficiency when it comes to reading because they seem to be a person with etiquette. It helps one communicate effectively and
voice out your thoughts." PAR.3
"Things that motivate me to improve my reading skills better is to become more knowledgeable individual
and to have more empathy towards other people." PAR.4 "What motivates me is the saying "knowledge is power" so I try to improve myself so that I can understand things that will eventually be my knowledge." PAR.8

The majority of participants give the same responses based on the knowledge they have learned and apply it to their daily lives, which is incredibly helpful for their reading books and research. The finding that the majority of participants have gained knowledge through reading and apply it to their daily lives is consistent with the existing literature on the importance of reading skills proficiency. As knowledge is often regarded as a potent source of empowerment, enabling individuals to navigate complex situations and make informed choices (Smith & Johnson, 2019). This idea aligns with the broader notion that access to information and education can enhance an individual's ability to influence their own destiny and contribute positively to society (Jones et al., 2020). As societies evolve in the digital age, the role of knowledge as a form of power remains integral to personal and collective progress (Brown, 2021). Furthermore, a study by Peng and Kievit (2020) found that reading proficiency is positively associated with academic achievement and cognitive development. Additionally, a study by Whitten, Labby, and Sullivan (2019) found that reading proficiency is essential for success in the workforce and everyday life.

Moreover, the finding that reading proficiency helps individuals with research is supported by research on the topic. According to Murphy et al. (2018), individuals with higher reading proficiency are better equipped to locate, comprehend, and synthesize information from complex texts. This ability to navigate and comprehend complex texts is particularly important in research contexts, where individuals must read and synthesize information from various sources.

The finding that participants apply their knowledge gained from reading to their daily lives is also supported by research. The study conducted by Ghaith and El-Sanyoura, (2019) and Magenes et al. (2022) found that reading proficiency is positively associated with everyday problem-solving skills. Additionally, according to Mar (2018), Whitten et al. (2019), Al Falaq et al. (2021), and Dodell-Feder et al. (2018), reading literary fiction enhances individuals' ability to understand and navigate complex social situations, which can be useful in daily life.

In conclusion, the finding that most participants have gained knowledge through reading and apply it to their daily lives aligns with existing research on the importance of reading proficiency for academic achievement, cognitive development, success in the workforce, and everyday life. Furthermore, the finding that reading proficiency aids in research and problem-solving aligns with research on the topic. These findings suggest that promoting reading proficiency
among college students may have positive impacts on their academic, professional, and personal lives.

Helps fluency and critical thinking. Participants reading books and researching skills have improved, as have their critical thinking and fluency. The students are allowed to choose how, what, when, and where they want to learn utilizing literature and research. Additionally, participants learn how to be creative and enhance their knowledge and abilities through reading and conducting research. They responded as follows to support.

The majority of participants respond by saying that they have become more fluency and critical thinking thanks to the usage of books and do some research, which aids them in their face-to-face or online learning. The finding that reading skills proficiency positively influences fluency and critical thinking is consistent with previous studies. According to Din (2020), Yulian (2021), Aghajani and Gholamrezapour (2019), proficient reading skills are essential in comprehending and analyzing information effectively, which contributes to the development of critical thinking. Additionally, Tourimpampa et al. (2018) and Peng and Kievit (2020) found that reading proficiency has a positive effect on cognitive development, which includes the development of critical thinking.

Moreover, the use of books and research for learning has been linked to improved academic performance. According to Kahu and Nelson (2018) and Dunn and Kennedy (2019), students who engage in reading and research activities tend to have higher academic achievement levels compared to those who do not. This could be attributed to the fact that reading and research activities enhance students' comprehension and retention of information, as well as their ability to apply the knowledge they have gained in various contexts.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the impact of reading skills proficiency on learning is not limited to face-to-face instruction only. As highlighted by Yu (2022), reading skills proficiency plays a crucial role in online learning environments as well. In particular, students with strong reading skills are better equipped to navigate the vast amount of information available online and to identify credible sources, which is essential for successful online learning.

In conclusion, the researchers found that reading skills proficiency positively influences fluency and critical thinking among first-year students is consistent with previous research.

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Experienced Difficulties of First-year students in reading

Figure 3. Experienced Difficulties of First-year students in reading
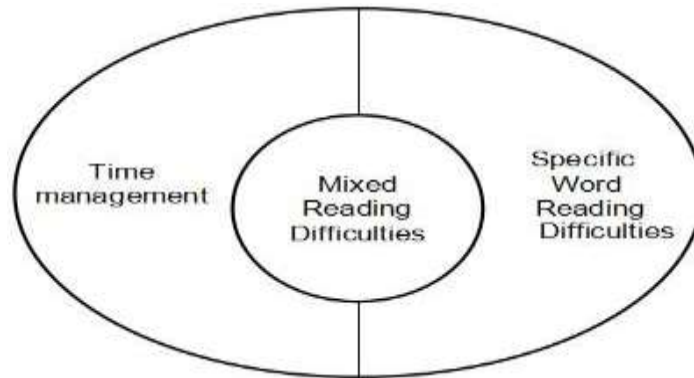
B.   Mixed Reading Difficulties. This study's third goal is to find the difficulties that they are experiencing or have experienced in reading. Taking into account the responses that the respondents provided during the various sessions:

Time management. Participants time management skills have improved. Although some participants are busy with some homework, they still manage to have time to read books. They responded as follows to support. Participants 3 cited this as evidence.
"In my every day, I get to challenge my reading comprehension since there is homework that requires this. In my free time, I also spend my time reading random literary-related texts." PAR.3

The majority of participants give the same responses based on their time management, which is incredibly helpful for their read books and research. The finding that time management is a crucial factor in developing reading skills proficiency among first-year college students is consistent with existing literature on the topic. According to a study by Al-Shaaban and Al-Sharhan (2019), time management skills play a significant role in academic achievement and learning outcomes. Similarly, Catalonia et al. (2023) found that time management is a critical predictor of academic success among college students.

One possible explanation for this finding is that effective time management allows students to allocate sufficient time to reading and research activities, which in turn improves their reading skills proficiency. This is supported by a study by Peng and Jianxin (2017) and Buck and Torgesen (2018), which found that students who allocate more time to reading are more likely to develop higher levels of reading proficiency.

In addition, the finding that time management is crucial for reading skills proficiency may also be related to the broader concept of self-regulated learning (SRL). According to Xiao and Yang (2019), Anthonysamy et al. (2021), and Granberg et al. (2021), SRL involves the ability to set goals, monitor one's progress, and adjust strategies as needed. Effective time management is a critical component of SRL, as it allows students to plan and organize their learning activities in a systematic and efficient manner.

Overall, the finding that time management is crucial for developing reading skills proficiency among first-year college students is supported by existing literature on the topic. This underscores the importance of teaching time management skills to students, particularly those who are just beginning their college careers. By developing effective time management habits early on, students can improve their academic performance and set themselves up for success in the years ahead.

Confusion of unfamiliar words. Participants confusion of unfamiliar words experience in reading. Although some participants are doing take notes and search for the meaning of that word. They responded as follows to support. Participants 2, 5, and 8 cited this as evidence.
"I jot down notes every unfamiliar word I encounter, and then I do research for me to understand what was the meaning of the word. I also love reading loud." P2
"When reading, I like to bring a dictionary with me so I can research immediately the word I just encountered. I write the word in a piece of paper and review it every morning until I get to master its meaning. I also like to highlight the
text whose meaning gives significance to my knowledge." P5 "My habit, as I've said earlier, is I try to summarize what I read and question myself to make sure I understand it." P8

The majority of participants offer the same explanations, noting that reading books can be confusing due to the use of unfamiliar words. The finding that students perceive reading books to be confusing due to the use of unfamiliar words is consistent with previous studies on the challenges faced by students in

reading comprehension. According to a study by Stevani et al. (2022), students encounter difficulties in reading comprehension when they encounter unfamiliar words, which can lead to difficulty in constructing meaning from the text. Similarly, Cates, Traxler, and Corina (2022) found that vocabulary knowledge is a key predictor of reading comprehension. In order to address this challenge, it is important to develop strategies to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge. One effective strategy is to explicitly teach vocabulary words and their meanings (Sardi, 2022). Additionally, providing students with opportunities to read a variety of texts can help to expose them to a range of vocabulary words and increase their overall vocabulary knowledge (Teng, 2020).

It is also important to consider the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension. Students may need help with unfamiliar words because they need the necessary background knowledge to connect with the text (Cervetti & Wright, 2020). Therefore, it is vital to provide opportunities for students to build their background knowledge through experiences, discussions, and exposure to various texts.

In conclusion, the researchers found that students perceive reading books to be confusing due to the use of unfamiliar words, highlighting the importance of developing strategies to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge and background knowledge in order to improve reading comprehension. By addressing these challenges, educators can help to support students in developing strong reading skills that will serve them well throughout their academic and professional careers.

The figure above shows grouped patterns, which represent the emergent theme of research meaning and summarize to enhance English that was discovered in this study.

5. IMPLICATION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS
5.1 Implications
Despite the fact that the majority of 21st-century learners have grown dependent on using any books they want to read, they have managed to work hard and make every effort to find the best strategies that work for them and that will enable them to overcome obstacles to accomplish their objectives, and particularly improve their reading proficiency. Since everything in our digital age can be obtained online or in books if someone finds learning difficult. Some people learn slowly, so it might be better for them to learn independently with the aid of books and the Internet. It is predicated on what the respondents say.

Further, teachers might aid students in learning by inspiring and directing them as they read. Despite the aforementioned research findings, the study did contain certain drawbacks. Some of them claimed that their inability to concentrate and headaches caused by prolonged reading made it difficult for them to read books. They did, however, accept the difficulties that this book presents. Since everything around us today requires the aid of books and if you refuse to study, it would be tougher for you to learn, they got more inventive and underwent significant change. They are also aware that, when utilizing books for themselves and others, they are accountable for every decision they make and for using them in a way that is appropriate and productive.

Implications for future researchers in the field of reading skills proficiency among students include conducting comparative studies between different year levels. This would allow researchers to examine the progression of reading skills proficiency as students advance in their academic journey. By comparing the reading abilities of students in different year levels, researchers can gain insights into the specific challenges and improvements that occur over time. This could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the developmental trajectory of reading skills and help inform targeted interventions at various educational stages. Additionally, future researchers could explore the specific strategies and interventions that are most effective in enhancing reading skills proficiency. By systematically evaluating different instructional approaches, intervention programs, or teaching methods, researchers can identify evidence-based practices that have the greatest impact on students' reading abilities. This could guide educators and policymakers in designing and implementing effective interventions to improve reading skills among students.

Furthermore, investigating the role of technology in promoting reading skills proficiency could be an interesting avenue for future researchers. With the increasing use of digital tools and online resources, exploring the effectiveness of technology-based interventions or digital reading platforms in improving reading skills could provide valuable insights. This could involve examining the impact of interactive reading apps, digital libraries, or multimedia materials on students' reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and overall reading proficiency.

Overall, future researchers in the field of reading skills proficiency should aim to expand our understanding of effective instructional strategies, track the developmental progression of reading abilities, and explore the potential of technology in supporting reading skill development. By addressing these areas, researchers can contribute to the advancement of effective educational practices and promote literacy among students.

5.2 Concluding Remarks:
This study investigated the perceptions of first-year college students regarding the implications of reading skills proficiency in their lives. The findings revealed three key emergent themes: self-efficacy to improve reading skills, self-sufficiency with their work to improve English, and mixed reading difficulties.

Self-efficacy: Participants identified enhanced vocabulary, strong grammar and pronunciation as factors contributing to their sense of self-efficacy. These findings align with existing research highlighting the connection between reading skills proficiency and

self-confidence in academic achievement. This suggests that interventions aimed at improving students' reading skills may also have a positive impact on their self-efficacy, leading to enhanced academic performance and overall growth. Self-sufficiency: The majority of participants reported that reading books and research activities helped them acquire knowledge and apply it to their daily lives. This aligns with the established understanding of reading as a source of empowerment, enabling individuals to navigate complex situations and make informed decisions.

Furthermore, reading was found to improve critical thinking and fluency, further supporting its role in fostering cognitive development and learning. These findings underscore the importance of promoting reading
proficiency among college students not only for academic success but also for personal and professional development. Mixed Reading Difficulties: The study identified time management and unfamiliar words as common reading difficulties experienced by participants. The challenges posed by time management emphasize the need for effective time management strategies, particularly for first-year students. Regarding unfamiliar words, the findings highlight the importance of vocabulary expansion strategies and building background knowledge to improve reading comprehension. By addressing these difficulties, educators can help students overcome obstacles and unlock the full potential of reading as a trans-formative tool.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of how first-year college students perceive the significance of reading skills proficiency in their lives. The findings highlight the multifaceted benefits of reading, encompassing not only academic achievement but also personal growth, critical thinking, and self-efficacy. By recognizing and addressing the challenges faced by students, educators can implement effective strategies to foster a love of reading and equip students with the necessary skills to succeed throughout their academic careers and beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The researchers involved in this study have not disclosed any potential conflicts of interest. We have conducted the study and analyzed the collected data impartially to ensure the reliability and objectivity of the research findings. This impartiality indicates that the researchers have no personal biases or vested interests that could potentially influence the results or conclusions drawn from the study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

MAIN QUESTIONS	PROBING QUESTION
What is the first-year students' perception of the implication of reading skills proficiency in the school?	What are the advantages of proficient readers? 2. What can be the long-term benefit of obtaining proficiency in reading?
What is your perception when it comes to the concept of self- assessment of reading skill proficiency?	1. What do you consider to be your biggest strengths and weaknesses in terms of reading skill proficiency? 2. What are your practices in improving your reading skills proficiency? What Motivates you to improve your reading skills better?
What are some difficulties you are experiencing or have experienced in reading?	How often do you practice your reading? What are your habits when reading?

Implication of Reading Skills Proficiency in First Year Students of UM Digos College: An in Depth Perception of First Year College students

APPENDIX B
Thematic Analysis Flow Chart